Dr. Damon Arnold recognized for “Marks of Excellence”

Public health takes the spotlight at black administrators’ annual luncheon

April 12, 2012 — As a visionary behind Chicago State University’s new master’s degree in public health, Dr. Damon Arnold adds to his long list of accomplishments: Arnold received the Marks of Excellence Award Tuesday at 13th annual National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA) Chicago Chapter luncheon at the Fairmont Hotel.

“This is an auspicious time to receive this award as Chicago State’s College of Health Sciences invests in community health — and ultimately its wealth — by offering the new MPH program I was asked to develop and grow,” says Arnold, former director of the Illinois Department of Health.

“Syncing government, business and community efforts to accomplish aggressive public health campaigns takes a significant commitment to strategy that requires a high degree of skill, such as those cultivated and nourished by NFPBA,” Arnold says.

Arnold, a retired U.S. Army National Guard colonel, was appointed the 16th Illinois public health director in 2007 and operated an agency of 1,123 employees with an annual budget of more than $600 million serving nearly 12.5 million residents. He stepped down in fall 2011 to build CSU’s MPH program that includes a diverse group of professionals, from physicians and nurses, to public and private sector, health-care and community workers.

Arnold completed 17 overseas missions and was awarded the highly coveted Military Legion of Merit Medal from President Obama. He also was awarded three Army Commendation Medals for his wartime deployments to Iraq and Kuwait.

“What really stood out for us is the fact that Dr. Arnold is creating a program for Chicago State,” says Derrick Brownlee, NFBPA president. “A graduate program around health care attracted us because health care is one of the leading job sectors over the next 20 to 30 years. Whether people are working in policy, direct service or administration, that’s where the jobs are.”

The NFPBA is vital resource for top-level administrators in all areas touched by public policy. The Chicago chapter engages in continuing education and information sharing that helps senior managers perform effectively in every government discipline.

Arnold joins an impressive cast of awardees: Cook County Commissioner Robert Steele, President’s Award; Judith Rice, senior vice president, BMO Harris Bank, Corporate Leadership Award; Karen Walker, CFO, Chicago Transit Authority, Marks of Excellence; and Sandee Kastrul, president, i.c. stars.